

/139 cont./

There is no doubt that the

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⁶⁴⁸ gradual political awakening of the Terena has been an incentive to assimilation, by contributing to the intensification of inter-ethnic relations with a clearly defined objective, such as playing a role in "Purutuya" politics, i.e., to obtain symmetrical relations, or, in some cases, such as that of the urbanized Indians, to fight for the rights of the class to which they belong. For this reason, we can regard the activity of the political parties, directly or indirectly, as a convergent factor of the greatest importance in the process of assimilation.

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⁵⁵⁷ 6. With the exception of the factors noted in the first two paragraphs (1 and 2), in which we dealt with the attraction the cities exercise on the Terena, and of military service as the source of new experiences and advantages to the young Indian man, the other factors operate exclusively on the plane of acculturation, not exercising any appreciable influence on social mobility. The case of the councilman mentioned above, in perspective, does not permit us to judge the importance of the increase in political awareness on this last-mentioned plane, since his case seems to be the only one with which we are acquainted up to now. There is no case of spatial mobility or of social climbing through political mechanisms. The factor ^[464] that plays the most significant part in the occurrence of social mobility is the labor market. In it, as has already been mentioned several times, the Terena hold an important place from various standpoints.

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⁴⁸⁴ These Indians made up the basic labor force, for a long time, /140/ on the fazendas that formed in southern Mato Grosso, especially in the proximities of the region they occupied.

^[178] With the railroad and the resulting population growth in the southern part of the state, their importance naturally decreased, but they did not cease to be recruited for agricultural work, herding, and especially, the extraction of timber and angico bark, and the retention of their place on the regional labor

^[461] market was thus assured. Among these varieties of work, they
 • ^[147] have no peers in the extractive tasks, for which they have

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*177 developed a superior technique, in combination with the great
464 endurance which they show in a most arduous form of labor.
461 It is general knowledge in Mato Grosso that there is no better
174 casqueiro /"bark stripper"/ than the Terêna. At a "round table"
[314] we held in Duque Estrada, in 1955, we had the opportunity to
[124] hear the testimonies of three fazendeiros, who were unanimously
favorable to the Indian as a laborer, in spite of the fact that at
first they tried to disparage him, only changing their attitude
and giving up the stereotypes after an intensive discussion
among them which we stimulated. They finally agreed that the
Terêna is the /basic/ regional manual laborer, and even the
manual laborer in highest demand: "He works well, lives on
little, and is very obedient."

46 The extraction of angico bark or, simply, of timber,
seem to be preferential productive activities of the aldeia Terêna,
with the exception, of course, of work on their own farm plots.
In 1957 the leader of a work gang could earn 80 cruzeiros a day,
46 and the men under him 65 cruzeiros. Such undertakings do not
484 bring them as much as it might seem, because expenses are very
high: food, clothing, and work tools; aside from this, the days
when they are away from their families--from about one week
to one month--are regarded as very tough: the sleeping arrange-
ments are worse, they have no women, the food is bad, and the

[229] money they bring back does not make up for it. . . . But even so,
they prefer to wander from fazenda to fazenda, i.e., changuear,
always returning to the aldeia, to leaving it and settling with
46 their family in some "colônia." The work pattern of most of
these Indians is a combination of the changa, i.e., sporadic
work for masters, with planting on their own "lots," in the aldeia.

*177 The nonmanual labor in the city, or the craft work in
463 the country, for the aldeia Indian, represents a "saving of the
426 body," and thus /141/ an incentive to giving up the traditional
159 production activities. Let us take, as an illustration, the case
*177 of the Indian, Arlindo: this Terêna, a young man of 28, had
256 begun work in the bakery trade in the city of Aquidauana,
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